
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
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THE

APOSTATE,

A TRAGEDY, IN FIVE ACTS;

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT-GARDEN.

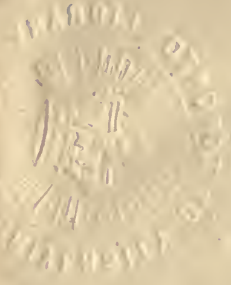
By RICHARD SHEIL, Esq.

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LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.

1817.

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Printed by W. CLOWES, Northumberland-court, Strand.

TO MISS O'NEILL.

MADAM,

I AM indebted to you for the zealous and brilliant exertion of your rare talents, in the performance of this Tragedy—for the kind and judicious suggestions which I derived from your dramatic taste and knowledge, in the course of its composition,—and I inscribe it to you—

I have the honour to be,

MADAM,

Your most obedient

and faithful Servant,

RICHARD SHEIL.

Garden have brought together? The dignity—the pathos,—the subdued and cultivated genius of Mr. Young; the fine countenance, the graceful movement, and the impassioned tenderness of Mr. C. Kemble; the just conception and the admirable execution of Mr. Macready, who, by his great powers, succeeded in counteracting the odium which such a character as *Pescara* was calculated to inspire;—these would impose obligation upon writers to whose talents the author does not aspire.—Of Miss O'Neill he forbears to say any thing—she finds her eulogy in tears—those evidences of tragic superiority to which Athens gave the palm.

It is not only to the performers in this tragedy that the author owes his thanks—he returns them to Mr. Fawcett, for his zealous and judicious superintendence of the preparation of his tragedy, and his gentleman-like attentions towards himself.

Mr. Bishop assisted the Author by two of those delightful airs which he only can produce.

He cannot conclude without expressing his warm acknowledgments for the liberality of the proprietors in sparing no expense, and for their great personal politeness.

The metre will be occasionally found incomplete, as the play is published from the prompt-book. The passages omitted in representation were not considered by the author as worthy of publication.

PROLOGUE.

(WRITTEN BY WILLIAM WALLACE, ESQ.)

SPOKEN BY MR. CONNOR.

VARIOUS the realms, and boundless are the views,
Where Fancy wanders with the Tragic Muse.
What spot to-night, o'er that expansive sphere,
Wakes manhood's sympathy—asks woman's tear?
'Tis Spain,—the land where oft, enthron'd sublime,
Shone Muse-lov'd Chivalry in olden time!
'Tis Spain—where late Britannia's conqu'ring hand
Unmanacled the Genius of the land.
Glory's bright beacon, lighted once again,
Bade prostrate Europe blush, and burst her chain;
And gave the world that noblest Chivalry,
Of reas'ning man—immortal Liberty!
What time stern Philip's ruthless edict fell
With persecution, and her band of hell,
In frantic ruin o'er the Moorish race—
Our Poet chose his fancied scene to trace.
He there presents, in virtue's bold relief,
A Moorish lover and a Moorish chief;
And shews a villain rob'd in guilt, in shame,
Altho' the villain bear the Christian name;
Convinc'd, when man in virtue's light you view,
Alike the Crescent or the Cross to you!
But not alone those springs, whose strong control
With ruder force can wake and vex the soul,
He tries—but still, in softer strains, would prove
That dearer spell of mightier pow'r to move,—
A woman's sorrows, and a woman's love!

One praise at least he claims to bless his lays—
Nor scene immoral, nor offensive phrase,
Wounds the chaste ear of virgin Modesty—
Quells the pure ardour of young Beauty's eye,
Or spreads the crimson of ingenuous shame
On outrag'd Innocence's cheek of flame!
Next—tho' a foreign land the scene supply'd—
Think not he chose a foreign Muse his guide:—
Spurning wild Germany's uncultur'd schools,
And self-pleas'd Gallia's boasted borrowed rules,
A native Muse, to-night, by native arts,
Would please your judgments and subdue your hearts.
And this, her simple suit, by me she sends—
Give British justice!—yet—as British friends!

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

HEMEYA, *the descendant of the Moorish Kings*.....} Mr. C. KEMBLE.

MALEC, *an old Moor* Mr. YOUNG.

HAMET, } *Two Moors, friends of* } Mr. CHAPMAN,
HALY, } *Hemeya* } Mr. COMER.

ALVAREZ, *a Nobleman of Grenada*..Mr. MURRAY.

PESCARA, *the Governor of Grenada*, Mr. M'CREADY.

GOMEZ, *an Inquisitor*.....Mr. EGERTON.

FLORINDA,.....Miss O'NEILL.

Moors, Spaniards, Guards, Monks, the Cadi.

Scene—Grenada.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

THE APOSTATE.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A Moorish Apartment in Grenada.

Enter Hemeya, Hamet, and Haly.

HEM. IT is in vain—you talk to me in vain.

HAM. Have you forgot that you are last of all
The race of famous kings who ruled Grenada
Before the Spaniard conquer'd? In their slavery,
The Moors still hold you for their righteous prince;
And, in return for kingly reverence,
You owe them kingly care.

HALY. Once, I remember,
The wrongs our Christian tyrants heap upon us
Could fire your soul with rage.—Aloud you cried
Against the treach'rous breach of ev'ry right
That Ferdinand secured; but now, when fame
Has told abroad, that Philip will blot out
The very name of Moor, and has decreed
To rob us of our faith, our nation's rites,
Our sacred usages, and all that men

Hold dearer far than life,—this fatal passion
Has bound you like a spell.

Ham. This Spanish woman
Has banish'd from your soul each nobler care.—
The daughter of Alvarez—she alone
Possesses all your being! You can think
And speak but of Florinda—When the Moors
Weep o'er their cruel wrongs, Aben Hemeya,
Amid the assembled council sits inrapt,
And, in a lengthen'd sigh, breathes out "Florinda!"

Hem. Oh! blame me not, it is my cruel fate!
I feel this passion, like necessity,
Rule my o'ermaster'd soul. What can you say?
Is there a pow'r in eloquence or reason
To cure the heart's deep malady?—Ha! tell me,
Have you e'er seen her face? have you beheld
That rare assemblage of all nature's beauties?
Ha! have you ever seen her? Where is the remedy
For passion like to mine?

Hal. You should have found it,
If not in duty, in despair.—You know
Our Spanish tyrants spurn as well as hate us—
Would not Alvarez deem it infamy
That e'en a Moorish prince should wed Florinda?
When you approach his palace, ev'ry slave,
The menials of his threshold, cry, in scorn,
"Behold the Moor!"
And e'en the fair Florinda
Has ne'er confessed she smiles upon your passion.
And yet you love———

HEM. And must love on for ever.
Love is a fire self-fed, and does not need
Hope to preserve its flame. Full well I know
I must despair—and yet, when I behold her,
And her blue eyes are lifted———

HAM. What avails it?
Even if she loved, she never could be yours—
Is she not promised to Grenada's governor?

HEM. Kind heaven, let not that fell Pescara clasp
Those beauties to his bosom, and profane
An angel's form in his accurs'd embrace!
Oh no! it will not be—for she abhors him!
She shudders when she sees that man of blood,
Whom Philip sends to crush us. Well she feels
That he was once the Inquisition's satellite,
Till Philip pluck'd the cowl from off his front,
To raise him to his councils. Oh! Florinda,
Before I see thee his, may heav'n's swift fire
Fall on my head!

HAL. Weak and degenerate passion!
How it unmans your nature! I perceive
Malec alone can break this fatal charm.
Would that the aged Moor, to whom your father
Upon his death-bed gave you, had return'd!
Too long amid Moorish mountaineers
He lingers from Grenada. Would he were here,
To wake your slumb'ring virtue!

HEM. (*Going*) Fare you well!

HAL. Where wouldst thou go? 'Tis midnight's silent hour.

Nightly you wander forth. No couch now strews
Repose and sleep for you; nor, till the morn,
Pale and aghast you come.

Ham. This is my hour,
My only hour of joy. Haly, I go
To stand beside her lattice---there, sometimes,
I hear her distant voice, when up to heav'n
It goes in midnight melody. The moon
Throws, sometimes, on her face, its tender beams;
And e'en when I no longer can behold her,
I see the light that from the casement shines,
And gaze upon it, as it were the star
Of lovers, till the morning. Hark!

Hal. A sound
Of far-off tumult murmurs on mine ear,
Like ocean's chafing surge—

Ham. Behold, the sky
Doth redden in the black horizon's verge;
A strong unnatural light streams o'er the dark,
And mocks the dawn of morn.

(*Fire-Bell heard.*)

Enter a Moor.

Moor. My lord, the palace
Of Count Alvarez stands inrapt in fire!

Hem. Florinda? Speak!

Moor. She has not yet been seen.

Hem. Oh heavens, Florinda!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Street in Grenada.

Enter Alvarez, supported by two Servants.

Alv. Where is my child? where is my child, Florinda?
Where do you drag me? Let me go!---unhand me!
Let me go back and die! Unnatural men,
You should not force the father from the child.
1st Serv. The thought is phrensy!---from the rolling smoke
You scarce were ta'en alive; and here we lead you
To breathe the fresh'ning air---You shall not go,
For, should you pass the flaming gates again,
They would swallow you for ever.
Alv. Oh, my daughter!

Enter a Spaniard.

Speak---tell me---speak!
Span. Your daughter has appear'd
Amid the flames at last, and at her casement
Stands with her face and arms to heaven uplifted,
And seems a suff'ring angel---while below
The multitude in speechless horror stand.
Alv. (*Kneeling.*) Hear, and record my oath! He that shall bear
Florinda to my arms shall win her hand,
And be inheritor of all my treasures;

And, if I break that oath, the heaviest curse
Fall on my head!

(*A loud shout is heard.*)

What is it that I hear?

(*Enter a Spaniard---after a short pause.*)

Span. My lord, a desp'rate man with furious force
Bursts thro' the gather'd thousands, scales the walls,
And plunges thro' the flame.

Alv. Oh, Heav'n reward him!

(*Another shout.*)

That sound sends life again thro' ev'ry vein,
And my heart bounds---

Voices without. She is sav'd! she is sav'd!

Alv. O heaven!
Lead me from hence, and let me see my child.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

A Garden adjoining the Palace of Alvarez, part of which appears already consumed and blackened.

Enter Hemeya, bearing Florinda in his arms.

Hem. I feel thy pressure in my heart---I have thee---
I clasp thee here, while all my senses rush
In the full throb of rapture---all my being

Seems gather'd in the pulse that beats to thee---
I am belov'd---I am belov'd!

FLOR. Hemeya!

Heaven, let me thank thee, that this generous man
Has saved me! I will look on thee, Hemeya!---
My eyes will tell thee,---I am very faint---
I cannot speak,---but I am grateful to thee.

HEM. Florinda! my belov'd!
Oh, pardon me,
If, for one moment of delirious joy,
I held thee to my heart; but here, behold,
A slave before thy feet—all that I ask
Is to gaze long upon thee, till my soul
Forgets all earthly sorrow—Oh, Florinda!
What sleepless nights, what days of desperation,
Since first thy form came on my raptur'd sight
And rested in my heart!
I did not know you lov'd me.

FLOR. I confess
That I am grateful to thee.

HEM. Do not talk
Of chilling gratitude; in the dread moment
When death hung hov'ring o'er thee—I did hear—
Oh! I did hear thee say, that death itself
Was welcome here---was welcome in my arms.

FLOR. Don't look upon me! for within thy gaze
I sink into the earth.

HEM. Why should Florinda,
She who is made of gentleness and pity,

Deny that beam of dawning happiness,
That glimpse of op'ning heaven?

Flor. Because Florinda
Scarce to her shudd'ring heart had dared to tell
What she has told to thee---I ne'er can wed thee,
And what a pang it is to love thee still!---
Dost thou not know my father frowns upon thee?
Dost thou not know I never can be thine?
Yet, wretched that I am, I have reveal'd
What I must blush to think of.---But he comes---
My father comes—Oh! I must dry these tears;
Within his arms forget my ev'ry grief;
And feel I am a daughter.—My dear father!

Enter Alvarez.

Alv. My child!

Hem. Yes, take her, clasp her to your heart,
And, as that heart beats with a father's transport,
Moor as I am, don't blame me that I love her.

Alv. By Heaven, I see thy mother in thy face!
Thou god-like man, what shall I say to thee?
Oh! let my tears fall on this noble hand,
And speak a burning soul!

Hem. I am rewarded.

Alv. Brave, generous man!

Hem. Nay, good my lord, you o'erpay
My poor desert, and grow my creditor:—
But you forget me—I am most unworthy,---
I am the Moor.

Alv. No,---I remember well,
Thou art hateful to the Christian.---Yesterday

I did command Florinda, on the pain
Of heaviest imprecation, ne'er to gaze
Upon thy face again.

FLOR. Oh, my dear father!
Florinda can be wretched if you please,
But not ungrateful too.

ALV. Give me thy hand:---
You love the Moor?

FLOR. My lord!

ALV. Come, you confess it;
Your looks reveal your heart; and Count Pescara
Interpreted the silent tear aright,
When first I bade you wed him.

FLOR. Let my grave,
Oh! let a couch of lead, let the cold shroud,
And the earth's grass, be all my place of rest,
Ere Count Pescara, at Heaven's awful shrine,
Claims from these lips the perjur'd oath to love
The man from whom my sinking heart recoils.

HEM. Howe'er you deal with me, let not Florinda
Be wedded to that villain!——

ALV. Hear me, Moor!
Pescara is Grenada's governor,
And bears the sway of Philip;---long he loved
And woo'd Florinda with her father's sanction.
Thou art a Moor---thy nation is a slave---
And, tho' from Moorish kings thou art descended,
The Christian spurns thee---Yet it is to thee
I give Florinda's hand.

FLO. What do I hear?

Hem. Am I in heaven?---O speak, speak, Count
Alvarez,
Speak it again!---Let me be sure of it,
For I misdoubt my senses.

Alv. She is yours!

Hem. Which of you shall I kneel to? Let me
press
Your rev'rend knees within my straining arms---
I shall grow wild with rapture---Men will say
The madd'ning planet smote me with its power.
Florinda, thou art mine---my wife---my joy!---
Thou exquisite perfection!---Thou fair creature!
Who now shall part us?

(*As he embraces her, Pescara enters.*)

Pes. I! Speak, Count Alvarez,
What is it I behold?---Don't look upon me
As if you never had beheld my face.
I am Pescara---You have not to learn
What Count Pescara is.---Who ever wrong'd me
That did not perish? I had come to greet you,
And, as I pass'd, the rascal rabble talk'd
Of some wild dotard vow, some grey-beard's
folly---
I seiz'd a wretch that dar'd to slander you,
And dash'd him to the earth for the vile falsehood.

Alv. If gratitude be crime---

Pes. What do I hear?

Hem. What you shall hear again.

Pes. Moor, not from thee---
I would not let thee speak a Spaniard's shame.

You, madam, will inform me; you, whose eyes
Are bent upon the ground,---whose yielding form
Doth seem like sculptur'd modesty---Nay, tell me,
For I have tidings for *your* ear.

FLOR. My lord, I do confess, my father's will
Unites me to the Moor.

PES. And you obey him;
For here obedience is an easy virtue.

FLOR. Yes---where my heart swells with the glowing sense
Of tender thrilling gratitude!---My being
Owns in its deep recess the consciousness
That it is all his own—Nay, think, my lord,
Can I behold his face, and not exclaim,
"This is the man who sav'd me!" Can I feel
The pleasures of existence,—can I breathe
The morning air, or see the dying day
Sink in the western sky,—can I inhale
The rose's perfume, or behold the lights
That shine for ever in yon infinite heaven,---
Or can I taste one joy that nature gives
To this, our earthly tarrying place,---nor think
That 'tis to him I owe each little flower
I tread on in life's bleakness?
E'en now I place my hand upon my heart,
And, as it throbs, there is a voice within
That tells this throbbing heart it would be still,
Were not Hemeya brave.—This is my father,—
He gave that life Hemeya did preserve,---
And, when he gives my hand in recompense,
I cannot but obey.

Pes. I thank you, madam;---
And, since it seems that gratitude's the fashion,
Your pains shall be requited.---Know, fair maid,
The daughter of Alvarez never shall
Be wedded to a Moor---Nay, do not start---
Never!

Hem. My lord!

Pes. No!---never!

Alv. Count Pescara!
What is it that you mean?

Pes. I mean, my lord,
That others have more care of your nobility
Than you have ta'en yourself.---Ha! ha! a Moor!
One of that race that we have trodden down
From empire's height, and crush'd---a damn'd Morisco,
Accursed of the church, and by the laws
Proscrib'd and branded.---What, you choose a Moor
To swell the stream of your nobility
With his polluted blood?---In sooth, 'tis pleasant!

Hem. You have forgot me---you forget yourself.---
Thro' centuries of glory, on the heads
Of my great ancestors, the diadem
Shone thro' the world, and from each royal brow
Came down with gath'ring splendor;—and if here
It shines no more—'tis fate—But what art thou?—
The frown of Fortune could not make me base;
The smile of Fortune could not make thee noble.—
Who knows not that Pescara once, within

The Inquisition's dungeons, toil'd at torture?—
There Philip found you, and his kindred soul
Own'd the soft sympathy.

Pes. My birth!—confusion—
And must I ever feel the reptile crawl,
And see it pointed at?—What if I rush,
And with a blow strike life from out his heart?—
No—no! my dagger is my last resource.

(Draws a roll of parchment from his bosom.)

Here, Moor, within thy grasp I plant a serpent,
And, as it stings, think 'tis Pescara's answer---
This very night it reach'd me from Madrid,
And thou art first to hear it---Look you here---
If Caucasus were heap'd between you both,
With all his snows,—his snows have not the pow'r
To freeze your amorous passion half so soon
As Philip's will.---Farewell---but not for ever!

[*Exit Pescara.*

Alv. As Philip's will!---Rumour went late abroad
Spain's gloomy sovereign had decreed to crush
Your race to deeper servitude.---Florinda,
Be not so terrified.

Flor. Can I behold
The quick convulsive passions o'er his face,
And read his soul's deep agony, nor feel
A terror in my heart?---Tell me, Hemeya,
What heavy blow relentless Fortune strikes---
What other misery is still in store
To fall upon our heads.

Hem. A Christian!---No!---

Flor. Wilt thou not speak to me? wilt thou not chase
The dreadful fears that throng about my soul?---
Wilt thou not speak to me?

Hem. Accursed tyrant!
Florinda, wilt thou leave me?---Can my fate---
Can kings and priests—e'er pluck thee from my soul?

Flor. No!

Hem. Then, Florinda, thus I spurn the tyrant!
They'd make a Christian of me---Philip proscribes
My nation and my creed; and, on the pain
Of instant death, unless he publicly
Abjure his prophet's law, no Moor can wed
A Christian woman.

Flor. Well, dost thou renounce me?

Alv. Hear me, Hemeya!---Will you yield obedience
To Philip's will, and swear yourself a Christian?

Hem. A Christian!

Alv. Aye! it is the law.

Hem. The law!
What law can teach me to renounce my country?

Alv. Then choose between your prophet and Florinda.

Hem. Wilt thou abandon me? (*To Florinda.*)

Alv. Let my deep curse
Fall on her head.

Flor. Don't breathe those dreadful words—
Do I deserve that you should doubt me?—No!

In infancy I gaz'd upon your face
With an instinctive reverence, that grew
To reason's tender dictate—Never yet
Have I offended you; and let me say
My tears may flow from eyes long used to weeping,—
My form may wither in the gripe of grief—
My heart may break indeed---Love can do this---
But never can it teach Florinda's hand
To draw down sorrows on a father's age,
Or to deserve his curse.

HEM. This, this from thee!

FLOR. You've found the dreadful secret of my soul---
But hold---what am I doing?---Pride, where art thou?
Am I so fallen in passion?---Oh, my father,
Lead me from hence!

HEM. Florinda, stay one moment---
Don't leave me---don't abandon me.

FLOR. My father,
Lead me from hence!

Alv. (*To Hemeya.*) You have heard Alvarez' will---
Take one day for decision---If to-morrow
You do not, in the face of Heav'n, renounce
The faith of Mahomet, renounce Florinda!

HEM. Oh misery!---My Florinda, look upon me!

FLOR. Yes, I will look upon thee, and perhaps

Shall never look again---for, from this hour,
You never may behold or hear me more.

Hem. Then let me die!

Flor. Hemeya, listen to me!
My heart has own'd its weakness---yet, thank Heav'n,
With all my sex's folly, still I bear
My sex's dignity---I've not the pow'r
To crush the fatal passion in my breast,
But I can bury it---Yes, yes, Hemeya,
I feel my blood is noble, and Florinda
Shall never stoop before thee---From the world
I'll fly---from thee for ever!---Tears may fall,
But none shall see the blushes where they hang!---
Thou shalt not see me weep---thou shalt not have
The cruel pleasure---In religion's cells
I'll hide my wretchedness---Farewell, Hemeya!
And, Heaven, if I may dare to lift to thee
A pray'r of earthly passion, touch his heart,
Fill it with holy light, and make him thine---
And, howsoe'er thou shalt decide my doom,
On him pour down thy blessings!---

(As she goes out, she looks back for an instant.)

Oh, Hemeya!---

[*Exit Florinda.*

Hemeya manet.

She blest me as she parted; yet I feel
A curse fall on my heart!---

I am doom'd to choose
Between despair and crime---My fate cries out,
Be wretched or be guilty!---But, Florinda,
How could I live without thee?---Can I see
That form, to which I stretch'd my desp'rate arms
In the wild dream of passion and despair,
Brought to my bosom in assur'd reality,
Nor rush to clasp it here?---Would the faint traveller
Who long hath toil'd thro' Afric's sultry sands,
Droop o'er the fount that 'mid the desert gush'd
Even from the burning rock, and die with thirst,
While its clear freshness woo'd him to be blest?---
No! he would drink, tho' there were poison in it.
[*Exit.*

END OF ACT THE FIRST.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

The exterior of the Inquisition.

Enter Malec and Haly.

MALEC. RENOUNCE his people! Haly, I did not think,
As here I journey'd from yon rugged cliffs,
To hear these fatal tidings.---Oh Hemeya!

HALY. After long struggles of reluctant honor,
He promis'd to abjure his nation's creed.
To-day the public rite of abjuration
Is to be solemnized.

MALEC. I have heard enough.

HAL. But when you tell what you had come to teach him---
And he has heard that on his brows shall shine
The crown his fathers wore---When you have told him---

MAL. I will not tell him---Till he has deserv'd,
He shall not wear a crown. A diadem
Shall never call him back to honor's road,
If honor could not do it. But I'll try
My wonted pow'r upon him---From its ashes
'Twill not be hard to wake th' expiring flame

That once burnt bright within him. Thou, meanwhile,
Call at the Cadi's house the noblest Moors,
That to their secret ears I may unfold
The cause of my return.

[*Exit Haly.*

MAL. Renounce the faith
That suff'ring had endear'd, when twenty thousand
Of his brave countrymen are leagued together,
To break the bonds of Philip's tyranny!---
When freedom's flame from yonder mountain tops
Will blaze thro' Spain's wide realm, he basely falls
Before the tyrant's edict, and obeys!---
But, hold---he comes!---There was a time, Hemeya,
When I had rush'd to catch thee in my arms.

[*Enter Hemeya.*

I charge thee not to touch my garment's edge.

HEM. Oh, Malec, this from thee! When I behold thee,
After long months of absence, dost thou scorn me?

MAL. Dost thou not scorn thyself?---I know it all;
Fame has not kept thy baseness from mine ears.
What, for a wanton ——!

HEM. Wanton!

MAL. Ay, a Spanish wanton!---
Is she not one of those same melting dames,
Unlike the prophet's virgin votaries,

That let men's eyes blaze on unveiled charms,
And are themselves the wooers?---'Tis for a wanton
You choose to be a villain.

Hem. I permit you
To rail against myself; heap on my head
Your heaviest curse, your blackest reprobation;
Open my heart, and stab; drive in more deep
The arrows of remorse;---but do not dare,
Tho' you're my father's friend.——

Mal. What should I fear?
Away, slight boy! and speak not of thy father.
I'm glad he sleeps in unattesting marble,
Else hadst thou been a parricide.

Hem. I am guilty; I confess that I am guilty.
But if you felt what youth and passion feel,—
If those soft eyes had ever beam'd upon thee,—
If long, like me, thou'dst wither'd in despair,
Till fresh'ning Hope rose in this desert heart,—
Oh, if, like me, thou'dst borne her in thy bosom,
While ruin flam'd above—

Mal. Forbear, fond youth! my ears are pall'd already.---
Rein in thy wanton fancy---Dost thou think
That I am made to hear a lover's follies?
Go, tell them to the moon, and howl with dogs!---
Did she possess the charms of her who sleeps
Within the prophet's bosom, I would spurn
The man who had renounc'd, for her embrace,
His country and himself.

Hem. We have no country!

Mal. Thou hast, indeed, no country.

Hem. Are we not bound to earth? The lording Spaniard
Treads on our heads---We groan beneath the yoke
That, shaken, gores more deeply!---
Resistance will but ope new founts of blood
To gush in foaming torrents---Dost thou forget
The Spaniard lifts the sword, and almost wishes
That we should give pretence to tyranny?
Look at yon gloomy towers; e'en now we stand
Within the shadows of the Inquisition.

Mal. Art thou afraid? Look at yon gloomy towers!
Has thy fair minion told thee to beware
Of damps and rheums, caught in the dungeon's vapours?
Or has she said those dainty limbs of thine
Were only made for love? Look at yon towers!---
Aye! I will look upon them, not to fear,
But deeply curse them. There ye stand aloft,
Frowning in all your black and dreary pride,
Monastic monuments of human misery,
Houses of torment, palaces of horror!
Oft have you echoed to the lengthen'd shriek
Of midnight murder; often have you heard
The deep-choaked groan of stifled agony
Burst in its dying whisper---Curses on ye!
Curse on the tyrant that sustains you too!
Oh, may ye one day, from your tow'ring height,
Fall on the wretches that uphold your domes,
And crush them in your ruins! Oh, Hemeya!

Look there, Hemeya! think how many Moors,
How many of our wretched countrymen,
Are doom'd to perish there, unless—
Hem. By Heav'ns!
Thy burning front, thy flaming eyes, proclaim it—
Some glorious thought is lab'ring—Speak—
what mean'st thou?
I feel thy spirit's mastery—my soul
Fires in the glowing contact—Malec, speak!
Tell me, what can we do?
Mal. What men can do
Who groan beneath the lash of tyranny,
And feel the strength of madness.—Have we not
scymitars?
'Twas not in vain I sought those rugged heights,
Nor vainly do I now again return—
Amid the Alpuxerra's cragged cliffs,
Are there not myriads of high-hearted Moors,
That only need a leader to be free?
Thy voice would be a trumpet in the mountains,
That, from their snow-crown'd tops and hollow
vales,
Would echo back the blast of liberty.—
Dost thou not understand me?
Hem. Speak!—Can I free my people?—Can I
rend
Our shameful bonds asunder, and revenge?—
Mal. Canst thou?—
Hem. Do not command me not to love;
But, if there be a road to liberty,

Provided Death, with his uplifted dart
Stand at its entrance---speak—is there a way?—
MAL. And, were there not a way,
We'd hew one in the rock!---There is a way---
HEM. My soul hangs in thy lips---
MAL. I fear thee still---
I fear thy wav'ring nature.
HEM. No, you wrong me---
By Heav'n you wrong me!---
MAL. Fall upon the earth,
And by thy father's sacred memory—
By all thy people's wrongs---by Allah's name—
Swear—

Enter Florinda.

FLOR. (*Interrupting him.*) Hold! what is it that I see?
HEM. A wretch!
MAL. Swear! quickly swear, before a woman's art
Turns thee to that a woman's self should spurn.
FLOR. What should he swear?---
MAL. For ever to renounce thee!
FLOR. Aye! let him, if he will; let him renounce me:
I will not say that I am hardly us'd,
Nor load him with my love!—I can bear all,
Except to see him perish.
MAL. Swear, Hemeya,
Never to be a Christian.
FLOR. Hold! for Heaven's mercy!

Hem. Bright angel, art thou come to save, or damn me?

Flor. I'm come to tell the perils that surround thee.—
Cruel, unkind, Hemeya! I perceive
The pow'r that Malec holds upon thy soul.—
But yesterday, e'en at the cloister's gates,
You cried you would renounce the world for me.

Mal. Aye! what is worth much more than all the world,
More than the crescent diadem that shines
On Selim's turban'd brow—more than the heav'n
The prophet's eye beheld—nay, more than thee—
His honour and his truth!—Rightly thou hast said
'Tis I who snatch him from thee.

Flor. Not from me—
It is from life you snatch him. Let him leave me—
Never behold me more!

Hem. Can I do that?

Flor. Do any thing but perish.
I reck not of myself; but I have heard,
Since last we parted, more than first I fear'd:
The king's decree has arm'd Pescara's hand
With pow'r omnipotent against the Moors.
Death hovers o'er thy head! Gomez, Pescara,
Are crouch'd to leap upon thee.
Hemeya, be a Christian, or you perish!

Hem. It is not hard to die—thou, thou alone
Art all that makes life worth the keeping to me.

Mal. I will not think a well-wrought tear or two

Can make thee base again.

HEM. Within thy bosom (*to Malec*)
I'll bury all my face; for, if I dare
To gaze upon her charms, they will unman me.

FLOR. And dost thou scorn to look upon Florinda?
And am I spurn'd so far? Once, once 'twas otherwise:
Now I am fit for scorn!

HEM. Florinda!

MAL. Hold!
Weigh not your country with a woman's tears.

FLOR. I am, indeed, a woman; and I feel
My sex's cruel portion, to be woo'd,
And flattered, and ador'd, until at last
We own our nature's folly;—then you spurn,
Who wept and sighed before. You then pull down
The idol that you worshipp'd and you deem,
Because a woman loves, she should be scorn'd!
I should not weep, and you would not despise me.

HEM. Malec!

MAL. Are you a man?—are you his son
Whose heart ne'er felt a throb but for his country?

HEM. Look here, and pity me!—Behold this face,
Where shines a soul so pure, so sweet a spirit—
Can I renounce her? tell me if I can—
Look on him, my Florinda! lift those eyes,
So full of light, and purity, and love;

Look on him, and he'll pity me.

Flor. Hemeya,

Art thou so kind again, and wilt thou live?

Hem. Stay near my heart, and, as I press thee thus,

I shall no longer feel this agony:

I never can resign thee.

Mal. Worthless Moor!

Why does my poniard tremble in my grasp?

Woman!

Flor. You shall not tear him into death.

Mal. (*Aside.*) I cannot do it---yet, must I behold

The son of Moorish kings a woman's slave?---

I'll try to rouse him still.---Perfidious traitor!

Hem. Traitor!

Mal. Traitor! And, if there be a name more foul,

Apostate!

Flor. Spare him---spare him!---Dost thou see

How his frame trembles, and what agony

Is stamp'd upon his face?---Oh, pity him!

Mal. I do indeed---I spurn him for his weakness;---

But, woman, have a care,---leave him,---renounce him,

Or else——

Flor. I can resign Hemeya's heart,

But cannot give his life---nay, tell me, Malec,

You, who have lov'd him, watch'd his tend'rest youth,

And hold him in your heart,---would you consent

To yield him up to burning martyrdom,
And cast him in the raging furnaces
That persecution lights with blasts of hell?

MAL. Better that he should perish———

FLOR. Dost thou say so?
Wouldst plunge him in destruction? Wouldst thou see him
In all the torments of a ling'ring death,
While Gomez and Pescara stood beside,
To glut themselves upon his agonies?

MAL. Woman, thou hast employ'd thy sex's cunning,
To make my friend a villain;---but beware,---
Else I will break thy spells---I will unloose
The charmed threads thou wind'st around his soul.

FLOR. I will renounce him!—You, perchance, desire,
That, from your prophet's vot'ries, he should choose
One fairer and more happy than Florinda—
Let him but speak it, and a cloister's cell
Shall be the refuge of her misery.—
I ask for nothing but Hemeya's safety,
And that's too dear to part with.

HEM. Leave me! never.

[*Malec draws his dagger.*

MAL. Then it is done—Prophet, behold the deed!
Strengthen my trembling hand—it is for freedom,
It is for heav'n I strike!

(He pauses for an instant, and, after a struggle, exclaims)

I cannot do it!—
I am myself a coward. (*He lets the dagger fall.*)
[*Hemeya and Florinda start.*
Hem. Abhorr'd, detested villain!
Mal. Call me coward,---
For that I feel I am;---'twas Heav'n itself
That bade me strike---and nature conquer'd me.
Hem. Curs'd be the creed that can make murder holy!---
Thee! thee! Florinda---here within my arms!---
Ha! was it here thou wouldst have plunged the poniard
Fear not, sweet trembler! shelter thee, my love!---
Harm shall ne'er reach thee here.---Avoid my sight!---
Fanatic, hence!---In him I once rever'd
I see the reeking murder---
Mal. Do not think
The blow was destin'd for her heart alone---
If, in obedience to the prophet's law,
I had been brave enough to do the deed
That Mahomet had sanctioned, from her heart
I would have drawn the steel to plunge it here,
And, as the life flow'd forth, have told thee that
Which thou shalt never hear. I leave thee now;
For thou art sunk so deep, that 'twere in vain
To pluck thee from thy shame. I go to seek
Grenada's Moors, met for a noble purpose.
Know, thou hast lost a crown---Farewell for ever!
Hemeya! ah! Hemeya! [*Exit Malec.*

HEM. I heed not what he says; I can but think
His cursed steel was aim'd against thy life.
FLOR. And that alone could blot thine image here.
HEM. But murder trembled as it gazed upon thee;
He could not strike---thy beauty, like a charm,
Unnerv'd his grasp!---Heav'n sets its seal upon thee,
And consecrates thy form!---Oh! what bright wonders
Are gathered in thy face, when e'en the prophet
Could not compel him to the bloody deed,
And Malec's hand could shudder!
FLOR. Thou then wilt ne'er
Renounce Florinda for the cruel faith
That would have pierc'd a heart that beats for thee.
That look! I'm blest,—and see, my father comes,
To be the witness of Florinda's bliss.

Enter Alvarez.

ALV. (*To Hemeya.*) I come to seek you, for the gorgeous temple
Is kindled with the church's brightest pomp,
And thousands wait your presence, to begin
The rite of abjuration.
HEM. Is my fate
So near its hard completion?
ALV. It is well

Thou hast consented, else the fiercest fires
The Inquisition kindles for the Moors
Had been thy portion.

Flor. Then lose not an instant;
Take him, my father, else he will go back.

Alv. To-night a priest shall join your wedded hands.

Hem. And let that thought alone possess my soul:
Upon the verge of ruin I will gaze
On the bright vision that allures me on,
And leads me to the gulf---I'll turn my eyes
Tow'rds the star-studded heav'n, where still it shines
While I am sinking. Yes! when I behold thee,
Conscience is scarce a rebel to thy charms.---
I go, Florinda; do not forget
That, if I dare be guilty, 'tis for thee!

[*Exeunt Alvarez and Hemeya.*

Flor. I am happy now---
A beam of angel-bliss falls on my heart,
And spreads heav'n's light about it.

The gates of the Inquisition open.---A bell tolls twice.

What do I see?

Enter Gomez, Pescara, and Inquisitors from the interior of the edifice.

The Inquisition's servants---Gomez!---Pescara!
(*She rushes up wildly and exultingly to the Inquisitors.*)

He is a Christian !---he has 'scaped your toils,---
Heav'n watches o'er his safety---You are foil'd.
Stir not another step---Back, back again---
Back to your cells and caverns. Do you not see
Faith, like an angel, hov'ring o'er his head ?---
Back, back, he is a Christian !

Gom. (*Advancing towards her.*) Who art thou,
That with loud adjuration hast presum'd
To interrupt the servants of the church ?

Pes. Forgive her, holy father, for she seems
Touch'd with inspiring power.
(*Goes up to her,*) The fair Florinda !
I cry you mercy, madam,

Flor. Pardon me,
I know not what I said.

Pes. Aye, but I know it.
Stay, stay, fair maid !---
(*To Gomez.*) Speed, Gomez---strike the blow,---
Strike it at once.---And, hark ye, as you go,
Think that Pescara will not be ungrateful.

[*Exeunt Gomez and Inquisitors.*

Flor. He sends him forth
Upon some dreadful purpose.

Pes. Do you deign
To look upon the wretch from whom your eyes
Were ever turn'd with loathing ?---But 'tis merciful.
This sun-set beam of hope,---
Nay, do not tremble;
You should not fear the man that you despise.

Flor. My lord, 'tis not my purpose to offend you;
One poor request is all that I entreat;—
Tell me, what cause has call'd these men of death
Forth from their dread abodes? Whom do they seek?
What is their dread intent?---Teach me, my lord;
I do conjure you, teach me.

Pes. Aye, 'tis your sex's vice---when curiosity
Once stings a woman's heart, scorn will turn suppliant,
And hate itself will almost learn to woo.

Flor. Not against him?

Pes. Who is it that you mean?
I do not understand you.

Flor. His dark eye
Glitters with horrid meaning---" Like the glass,
" Within whose orb the voice of magic calls
" The fiends from hell, within its fiery globe
" The demon passions rise!"
My lord, forgive me
That I have dar'd to ask---I take my leave.

Pes. (*Stopping her.*) Nay, do not go---Altho' I am forbid
To tell the secrets of the Inquisition,
Yet something can I tell you.

Flor. Well, my lord---?

Pes. 'Tis but a dream.

Flor. You mock me.

Pes. Do not think it---

You are a pious and believing maid,
And long within a convent's holy cells
Commun'd with Heav'n's pure votaries---I remember
When you did marvel what young virgins meant
When all their talk was love; for, on your heart,
It fell like moonlight on a frozen fountain.---
That heart has melted since;---but you, perchance,
Have still retain'd enough of true belief
Not to despise a vision! On my couch,
Last night, I long lay sleepless---I revolv'd
The scorns, the contumelies I have suffered,
But will not brook;---at last, sleep closed my eyelids,
And then methought I saw the am'rous Moor
In all the transports of exulting passion;
And I stood by, chained to a fiery pillar,
Condemned to gaze for ever; while two fiends
Did grin and mow upon me.---
Senseless I fell with rage.---As thus I lay,
From forth the yawning earth a figure rose,
Whose stature reach'd to heaven---his robes appear'd
Woven out of solid fire---around his head
A serpent twin'd its huge gigantic folds;
And on his front, in burning characters,
Was written "Vengeance!"

Flor. Vengeance! Oh! my lord!

You fright me;---but I ne'er offended you---
What crime have I committed?

Pes. Listen to me:---
He cried "Do not despair!" and bade me follow.

Flor. Let me depart---

Pes. I followed,---
He led me to a bow'r of Paradise,
And held a cup of joy, which, he exclaim'd,
Was mingled by himself---I quaff'd; 'twas nectar,
And thrilled within my heart---Then, then,
Florinda!---

Flor. Let me implore you.---(*Struggling.*)

Pes. Then, within my arms
Methought I press'd thee.

Flor. Hold!---This violence---

Pes. Nay, do not talk of violence;
You seem'd a willing and a tender bride,
And rushed into my bosom.---

Flor. Count Pescara,
I must not hear this mockery---Do not speak
Of what you should not think---This very day
Shall bind me, with an everlasting vow,
To him!---aye, him, I do not fear to tell it,---
To him my heart adores---'Tis not to me
You should unfold your wild and horrid fancies.

Pes. Mark me!—There's oft a prophecy in dreams. [*Exit Pescara.*

Flor. (*Alone*) Ha! this means something. Well I know Pescara:—
His voice doth sound like fate within my soul,
That answers back in faint and trembling echoes.

This horrid band of death—his fell commands---
The terrors of his eye—his looks of destiny—
All, all affright me!—If I must be wretched,
O Heav'n, don't let me know it—leave me still
The bliss of ignorance! What if Pescara,
Before Hemeya has abjured his creed,
Should treacherously seize him?—
Would that the rite were done!

[*A distant symphony is heard.*

What seraph music floats upon my soul?
Methinks it is the organ's solemn swell,
That from the church's aisles ascends to heaven.
The holy rite proceeds—Sweet sounds, awake;
Awake again upon my raptured soul!

[*A distant chorus sings.*

CHORUS.

The mystic light
Has dawn'd upon his sight;
He sees, and he believes. Rejoice, rejoice,
With one acclaiming voice!
Strike, seraphs! strike your harps, and, thro' the sky,
Swell the full tide of rapt'rous melody!

The Curtain falls, while Florinda kneels.

END OF ACT THE SECOND.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

A magnificent Apartment in the House of the Cadi of Grenada.

A number of Moors are assembled together.

The Cadi, Haly, Hamet, &c.

CADI. HALY, the noblest of Grenada's Moors,
Within the sacred walls where we are wont
To celebrate the prophet's holy name,
Meet at your bidding.

HA. You are call'd together
By the command of Malec; he returns
From the Alpuxerras, fraught with some great tiding,
And bade me summon you.

CADI. We need his counsel
In this our hour of sorrow—When our prince
Turns recreant from his people, it is well
Malec is left us still—for his great soul,
Firm to the prophet, lifts its stubborn height,
And, by the storms of fate, more deeply still
Is rooted in his country.

HAM. See—he comes!—
But with disturbed step.—

Enter Malec.

MAL. He is a Christian!
Lend me thy aid, good Hamet!—Ha! I am old—
What! do I weep? Dry—dry my tears in rage—
Do not despise me, Moors!---I am a man---
I am again a man---No more of him!---
Moors, fellow countrymen——
CADI. Speak, thou brave man!
We wait the voice of Heav'n——
MAL. The voice of Heav'n
First waked the great design---Amid the mountains
I sought those untam'd Moors, whose fathers fled
To Nature's fortresses, and left their sons
Their freedom and their faith!---The prophet smil'd,
And gave me pow'r to light within their breasts
The fire that glow'd in mine!---Moors! if your souls
Are noble as the rugged mountainers,
You will not brook to see your sacred rights
Robb'd by the tyrant.---Philip's law proscribes
Our creed, our rites, our sacred usages---
Plucks off our silken garments from our limbs,
And clothes us in our slav'ry. If he could,
He'd blot the burning sunbeam from our faces,

And wash us into white and pallid Christians!
Would you not rather die?

Moors. We will die before it.

Mal. No, you shall live in freedom!
Know that already twenty thousand Moors
Are leagued by direst oaths—Ha! I am glad
Your hands are laid upon your scymitars—
Draw, draw them forth; and, as they blaze aloft,
Swear that you will be free!

Moors. We swear!

Mal. Then learn,—
Thro' the Morisco towns a wide conspiracy
Has long been form'd to raise again on high
The standard of the prophet—The first blow
Shall be Grenada's capture!—Be prepar'd
To join your countrymen.—This very night,
Their marshall'd numbers, 'neath the auspicious moon,
Shall move upon the glorious enterprise!
And, ere the morn, the crescent shall be fix'd
High on the Alhambra's tow'rs!

Moors. We shall be free!

[*They brandish their scymitars.*

Mal. God and the prophet grant it!
Oh, Mahomet! look down from Paradise,—
Pity thy suffering people,—raise again
Amid the land, where once our fathers rul'd,
Thine empire and thy faith!—Kneel, fellow Moors
(For 'tis the hour of pray'r); and tow'rds the east,
As low you bend, from mid the sacred shrine,

Arise the hymn of holy melody,
For 'tis in Heaven we trust!

(*The Moors kneel.*)

Chaunt.

Allah! hear thy people's pray'r,
And lift thy vot'ries from despair!
On empire's mountain-height replace
The children of a noble race!
And set us free!
Prophet of God! restore
The conqu'ring days of yore,
And set us free!

(*A step is heard without.*)

CADI. Suspend your holy rite—let your hymns cease!
Behold, a Spaniard with profaning step
Comes rushing tow'rds the shrine!

MALEC. An infidel
Presumes to break on our solemnity!

Enter Hemeya in precipitation, and in Spanish garments. The Moors all rise.

What do I see? Ha! does he come to blast me?

HEM. I know you wonder that I dare approach
This consecrated spot—but when you hear——
Ha! now I feel my guilt.

MAL. Speak, noble Christian!
How are we honour'd with your gracious presence?

HEM. Oh! hear my prayer—

MAL. You mean your high commands---
I am a Moor, a vile ignoble slave---

You are a Christian!
These costly garments that adorn your body
Proclaim your lordly rule:---What is your pleasure?
If you would buffet me, as many a time
I've seen it done, I'll bear it patiently.
Employ the privilege of your religion,
Right worthy, true, and honorable Christian!

Hem. Your ev'ry word stings like an aspick here!

But do not think that, with remorseless soul,
I dare to come where ev'ry voiceless thing
Proclaims my guilt aloud---It is your safety
That leads me here before you---Malec, fly!---
The Inquisition---

Mal. Ha! the Inquisition---

Hem. Prepare to drag thee to their cells of death!

Mal. Are we betray'd? hast *thou* betray'd *us* too?

Traitor! accursed traitor! (*Seizes him---after a pause*). I had forgot---
'Tis well---I had forgot---I did not tell thee---

Hem. Oh, use me as thou wilt; I will not pause
To search thy meaning---Hear me! 'twas e'en now
I met Pescara---With a face of smile
He came to greet me, and, with outstretch'd arm,
He grasp'd my hand in his; with that exclaim'd,
"Here let our discord end: thou 'st gain'd Florinda:
A gen'rous mind tow'rs o'er its enmities!"—

And then, in pledge of friendship, bade me seek thee.—
He bade me tell thee that the Inquisition
Had mark'd thee for their victim—I had doubted him,
And would have turn'd with scorn, but that I saw
Their bands of death move o'er Grenada's streets.
E'en now they come.

MAL. Why, let them come—I'm glad
They choose me for the torture! Let them come,
And I will brave them.—Ha! I know you well—
The knock of death is there!

(*A loud knocking,*)

HEM. He is lost for ever!

(*The Moors draw their scymitars.*)

MAL. Let your scymitars
Shrink back within their sheaths.—Put up your weapons.

MOOR. They 're drawn but to defend you.

MAL. Put them up!
Rumour, perchance, has reach'd their watchful ears,
And, doubtless, they are come, in hope to force
Confession from my lips;---but I will brave them.
Another, in the tort'ring wheel, might speak
What all their engines ne'er shall tear from me.---
Nay, I command you, hence!---Put up your weapons---
Resistance now were vain---they would seize us all—

They'd put a hundred of us to the torture.
Fly hence! Begone! [*The Moors retire.*

Manent Hemeya and Malec.

Mal. They burst the gates---I am prepar'd to meet them

Enter Gomez at the head of the Inquisitors.

Gom. You stand the Inquisition's prisoner!
Invet'rate infidel, by thy example
The Moors shall learn———

Mal. That I'm beyond your power.

Gom. Beyond our power?

Mal. These old and palsied limbs indeed are yours,
But my eternal spirit is my own!
Then hear! I spurn as well as curse your power,
And the vile tyrant that upholds you!

Gom. Bear witness that he utters blasphemy
Against the anointed king.

Mal. Against the king! against the anointed king!
Oh, you profane that name, when thus you call
The villain who has sham'd the diadem
On his perfidious brows—His gloomy throne
Is pall'd with black, and stain'd with martyr blood,
While Superstition, with a torch of hell,
Stands its fierce guardian! "Monks, with holy rage,
" Rule ev'ry council, prompt each barb'rous impulse,
" And light their own ferocity within him!"

Such is the monarch "of your wretched Spain,"
Abhorr'd in his unhappy realm, and spurn'd
By all the world beside.

Gom. Hold! or yon roof
Will topple on our heads! You have confirm'd
The deadly guilt that you are charg'd withal,
And added heavier crime. You are accus'd
Of foul endeavour to seduce a Moor
Back to your cursed faith.

Hem. A Moor! what Moor?

Gom. Thyself!

Hem. Me!

Gom. And Grenada's governor,
The Count Pescara, at our dread tribunal
Stands his accuser.

Hem. What! Pescara? Ha!
A light from hell flares o'er my yawning ruin!
My horrors break upon me—What? Pescara!

Gom. And gave in proof that in this place of sacrilege
You would be found.

Hem. Why does the earth not burst?---
Why do I live?---Villain, abhorred villain!---
Caught in thy snares, and wrung within thy grasp:
Ingenious reptile, under friendship's shade
Who spun his toils, and from his poison'd heart
Wrought out the thread to catch me---Here I stand
Abus d and fool'd to ruin.

Mal. Lead me hence!

Hem. (*To Gomez.*) 'Tis false! 'tis false! there is not in the catalogue

Of all hell's crimes a name to speak its falsehood!
'Twas he himself who sent me!—What avails it?
I see the mock'ry grin upon thy brow:
Well may'st thou look upon me as a fiend
Glares on the damn'd below.

Gom. With proof before our eyes, one way alone
Remains to prove him guiltless.

Hem. Say, what means?
Shew me one ray of hope.

Gom. 'Tis thy example—
He must renounce his prophet!

Mal. Lead me hence!

Hem. Oh, Malec!

Mal. Well!

Hem. Say, shall the fatal blow
Fall from my innocent hand?

Mal. It will but perfect
What thou hast done already.---Well, speak on!
What wouldst thou ask?---Why dost thou stand aghast?

Hem. From rav'nous fires to save thy reverend head---
To save me from that horror---

Mal. What! have I struck thee dumb?---Thou didst not dare,—
By Heavens! thou didst not dare to ask it of me!
Christian was in thy lip, but back again
I frighted the base word within thy heart.---
There let it rankle---there let be an adder,

And breed a thousand other reptiles there---
It was enough to come before my face,
Fresh from the mould of shame, just stamp'd
with "Villain!"
Now get thee gone!

HEM. Must I behold thee—
And I the cursed cause?

MAL. May'st thou behold me---
Methinks I'll feel a joy in all my tortures,
Till they can tear thee too---Ha! have I rooted
thee?---
There stand for ever!

[*Exeunt Malec and Inquisitors.*

Enter Pescara.

PES. Now is he fit to gaze on,
And I am half reveng'd!---This is the time
To sink him deeper into desperation.---
Most noble Moor—Christian, I should have said!---

HEM. Ha! villain, art thou here?

PES. The Count Pescara,
Grenada's governor—your friend—is here

HEM. We are alone—Thou art come to give
me vengeance!
Perfidious fiend!—Nay, do not look astonish'd;
This is no time for mockery.

PES. Mockery! those alone
Who feel the poignant consciousness of shame
Should fear its chastisement—Who is compell'd
To spurn himself, will, in an ideot's eyes,
Seek the strong flashes of Malignity,
And find Scorn's fingers in an infant's hand!

You need not fear it—But I cry you mercy---
Moor sounded harshly in converted ears;
But I'll repair the wrong, and call you Christian.
And sure you are one---

Hem. Aye, I am---thank Heav'n,
This sword proclaims it---Once the scimitar
Hung idly at my side, and I was forc'd
To gnash a choak'd revenge---but now I am
A Spaniard, and your peer!---Thou damned villain,
Whose baseness is but equall'd by thy guilt---
If I did not abhor, I'd pity thee!

Pes. You'd pity me!---It is a kind return
For admiration. Sure those virtues most
Command our wonder that we ne'er can reach;
And I confess I ne'er could win the top
Of wisdom thou hast gain'd!---On Afric's shore,
Were I thy pirate brethren's wretched slave,
I would not be a cursed renegade!
I would not be what thou art!

Hem. I confess
That I am fallen, since e'en a wretch like thee
Can tell it to me too---and yet, Pescara,
One thing at least I've gained---the right of vengeance,
As thou shalt sorely feel! Come on, Pescara!

Pes. I marvel at your wrath—what is my crime?
Indeed you wrong me.

Hem. Do not feign to wonder.---
Did not thy treach'rous falsehood win me here?
Didst thou not bid me fly to save my friend?

And then———

PES. I did--but 'twas in kindness to thee.---
This day I mean to celebrate your marriage
With a most new and curious spectacle—
There shall be music too.

HEM. What dev'lish purpose
Lurks in thy words, and shews but half the fiend?

PES. I tell thee, music---thou shalt have the groans
Of grey-hair'd Malec ringing in thine ears!—
The crackling flames in which he perishes
Shall hiss upon thee when thou art softly laid
Within the bosom of the amorous fair!—
Nay, put thy sword within its sheath again;
Grenada's governor will never stoop
Down to thy wretched level!

HEM. Stay, Pescara!
And take the recompense of cowardice!
(*Strikes him.*)

PES. A blow—from thee! My furious soul breaks loose,
And rushes on thee---I intended vengeance
More desperate and sweet;---but thou hast forc'd me
To shed thy life too soon.
(*They fight.*)

(*Enter Florinda, who rushes between them.*)

FLOR. Forbear! forbear! or in Florinda's blood
Let Fury quench her fires.

PES. Fool that I was!

The sudden phrensy hurried me away—
I might have slain him, and a single blow
Had burst the complicated toils I weave.
(*Aloud.*) A woman's bosom be thy shield!—He 'scapes
Pescara's arm to goad Pescara's vengeance.
[*Exit.*

Hem. He goes, and bears life with him—Fall to ashes,
Thou recreant hand, that did not pierce his heart!
Thou too, Florinda, hast conspir'd against me—
See what I am for thy sake!

Flor. Oh, Hemeya!
Speak as thou wilt, thou canst not take away
The tender pleasure of beholding thee.—
E'en now 'twas rumour'd that the Inquisition
Had seiz'd and borne thee to the dread tribunal.—
The sound was terrible; Fear wing'd my steps;
I flew to find thee, and I find thee safe.—
E'en as I pass'd I saw that aged Moor
Dragg'd pitiless along—and oh, Hemeya!
I own a throb of joy—of fearful joy—
Burst here as I beheld it.

Hem. Joy, Florinda!

Flor. On thee they would have cast the clodded earth,—
On thee they would have flung opprobrium's stain,—
On thee they would have trampled;—ev'ry blow
That fell on Malec's face would have been thine.

And, oh! to see what thou hast scap'd—to feel,
To clasp, the certainty within my heart—

Hem. The earth was cast upon his reverend face?

Flor. It had been cast in thine.

Hem. The populace?

Flor. They would have scoff'd at thee too.

Hem. Now, perhaps,
From their infernal caverns they bring forth
The glitt'ring engines of ingenious agony—
The fires——

Flor. The fires were thine;—his groans and tortures,—
Their engines and their racks,—all, all were thine,
And I must have beheld it!

Hem. Coward! slave!
Thou traitor to thy people—with a lie
Stuck quiv'ring in thy heart!—Here, here I stand,
Fest'ring in Christian garments, with my shame,
Like an envenom'd robe, to scorch my limbs.
I dare lift up my brow, and mock the man.
Here is the place for me---here, on the earth,
Let ev'ry wretch tread on me as he passes.

[*Falls.*

Flor. This is too much for any mortal creature!
But, since I'm doom'd to more than human woe,
Give me, just Heav'n, much more than human patience!
Hemeya! dear as thou art cruel to me!

I can bear all my sorrow—but to see thee
Phrensied in agony—think, ev'ry pang
That breaks within thy heart, must burst in mine.

Hem. Hark thee, Florinda! I am not so vile—
I'm not the very villain that you think me.
Now, by my natal star in yonder heav'n,
He shall not perish!

Flor. Speak---what would'st thou do?

Hem. Where are you, Moors?---It is Hemeya calls!
Where are you? I would kindle in your souls
The brave and fierce despair that rages here.---
Or, if you dread to follow me---alone
I'll save or die with him.

Flor. You shall not rush on death.

Hem. The voice of Heav'n cries out within my soul---
A pow'r invincible swells in my arm---
Nothing can stay me now!---I'll save my friend;
And—when 'tis done---I've done with living too.

Flor. Why is it that I live then? Oh, Hemeya!
Why did you save me from the kinder flames,
To make me curse the blessed light of Heaven,
And call on death?---But I shall call in vain,
When they have dragg'd me shrieking to the altar,
And fell Pescara——

Hem. Ha, the cursed name,
That rakes up hell within me!---'Tis Pescara---

Flor. Yes, 'tis Pescara that will tear me too

To his accurs'd embrace.

HEM. Shew not that image
To my distracted thought.

FLOR. When thou art gone,
What will become of me? Who then will hear
My phrensied shrieks for death, for help, for mercy?
Who then will hear me? Who will help me then?
Thou wilt not! No, thou wilt abandon me.---
" Oh! they will ring the marriage-bell for me,
" And, mid their frantic merriment, I'll hear
" The toll of death for thee."

HEM. What shall I do?
Malec, can I desert thee?---And Florinda——!

FLOR. Is he to be my husband? Am I to be
The victim of his execrable love?

HEM. Thy husband! Fall before the face of Heav'n,
And bid it witness, that, whate'er befalls me---

FLOR. Behold me then! before the face of Heav'n----
That Heav'n that does not pity me—I swear,
If I must choose between Pescara's love
And death's eternal bed, I will prefer
Death for my horrid bridegroom.
Now then tell me,
Am I to die? for death, if thou forsake me,
Death only can preserve me.

HEM. No! this arm,
When I have done the deed, shall bear thee hence,
Far from Grenada's towers.

Enter Haly.

Hal. My lord, my lord!

Hem. Speak!---

Hal. Malec—

Hem. Malec!

Hal. Is condemn'd---

Hem. Condemn'd

Hal. Already has the toll of death peal'd out
Its dreadful notice---Ere the sun descend,
In all the pomp of martyrdom he dies.

Hem. Where are the Moors? Where are my countrymen?

Hal. Before the Inquisition's gates they stand,
And say he should not perish, if their prince——

Hem. Tell them he shall not perish:---from the pile
Of blazing fires I'll tear him.

Flor. Oh, Hemeya!
I see the fate that wings thee to perdition.

Hem. Wilt thou not follow me?

Flor. Throughout the world---
I'll fasten to thy fate---I'll perish with thee—
I stand upon the brink of destiny,
And see the deep descent that gapes beneath:---
Oh! since I cannot save thee from the gulf,
From the steep verge I'll leap with thee along—
Cling to thy heart, and grasp thee with my ruin!
(*She throws herself into his arms---he bears her off.*)

The curtain falls.

END OF ACT THE THIRD.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

A Street.

Bell tolls. Procession of the Inquisition.

Malec--Gomez. Hemeya, Hamet, Haly (in disguise).

GOM. HERE pause, and give his feeble frame repose,
Else, ere we gain the place of execution,
His aged limbs will sink upon the earth.

MALEC. (*Very weak.*) Monks, have I reach'd your faggots?

GOM. Scarce ten paces
Divide thee from the bourne of earthly pain.--
If thou hast pow'r, look forth, and hence behold
The Villarambla, where ascends the pile,
Upon whose burning top thou'rt doomed to die!

MALEC. (*Looking towards the side of the Stage,*) Let me behold!

HEM. O Haly, look upon him!

HAL. Hold, my lord,
Or you create suspicion--All bespeaks

The prosp'rous issue of our enterprise.—
I have dispos'd the bravest of the Moors
Around the pile of death.

Hem. Be it thy care
To lead him to the eastern gate,—meanwhile
I fly to bear Florinda from the spot
Of safety, where I left her—Then we mount
Our Arab steeds, and speed us to the mountains.

Gom. (*To Malec.*) Fear shakes your frame—
you seem to gaze appall'd
On yonder glitt'ring scene, where all Grenada
Has pour'd her thousands to behold thee die.

Mal. It is a spectacle that fills my heart
With terror for mankind,—not for myself.
Unhappy country! land of monks and martyrs!
Women, and men, and children,—young and old,—
The beggar and the noble,—all are there,
To view the spectacle of human pain,
In laughing horrid merriment!—The mother
Comes with her little children, to behold—
Nay, some, perhaps, bear life within their bosoms,
Yet gaze without a shudder!—There, young maids,
Who would have shriek'd to see a spider crawl,
Are met to see their fellow-creature burn—
And this you call religion! But your faith,
Spaniards! your faith doth tell you otherwise;
For He, who taught you, taught you mercy too.
But one day Heav'n will vindicate itself.

The blood of millions, that has drench'd your earth,
In a red cloud doth gather round his throne,
Charg'd with the lightnings of eternal wrath,
To burst, at last, upon your guilty heads.
Peru shall be reveng'd, and Mexico
Shall be reveng'd,---and I shall be reveng'd.

GOM. Perverse and harden'd sinner, I intended,
When here we paus'd, that thou shouldst give the Moors
Example of repentance.

MAL. Prithee, Monk,
Do not disturb me now---I am not worth it.
Grant me one poor request——

GOM. What wouldst thou ask?

MAL. Tell me, where is my friend?

GOM. I cannot tell thee.

MAL. I thought he would not have abandon'd me
In my last hour. When I am dead, perhaps,——

HEM. O Hamet!

HAM. Hold, or you will ruin all!

MAL. If there's a Spaniard here, to whom his creed
Does not forbid compassion, I entreat
That he approach, and bear a legacy
To one that still I love.

HEM. (*To Gomez.*) Let me approach him.

GOM. Then speed thee, for the hour of death draws on.

HEM. I cannot speak.

(*He goes up to Malec, whose weakness prevents him from distinctly seeing him.*)

Mal. Whoe'er thou art, I thank thee.
I have a friend, sir, you,—perchance, have heard it:—
He left his faith, and he abandon'd me;
E'en now, when you yourself have pity on me,
Hemeya left his friend;—and yet I charge thee
To bear him my forgiveness;—tell him, sir,
Tell him I love him still!—Wilt thou do this?

Hem. I'll tell him to revenge thee.

Mal. Hold! that voice!

Hem. Malec, no more! You wrong'd me.—Ha! he faints.

Gom. Come, let us on—Support his feebleness.

Mal. You need not lend your aid,—a passing trance
Came sudden on me,—I shall die contented.

(*Bell tolls—They move slowly out.*)

SCENE II.

A Street.

Enter Pescara and an Officer.

Pes. Have you dispos'd the chosen band of troops
Where I commanded?

Off. In the narrow street,
That from the Villarambla eastward runs,
The bravest soldiers of the garrison
Awaits your order.

PES. It is well. [*Exit Officer.*
(*Alone*) O Fortune,
Thy smile still follows me, and each event
Swells the deep rush of Fate, in whose swift tide
I'll plunge the man I loathe.—And did he think,
The Argus Hate would close his hundred eyes,
And that he could deceive me? [*A shout is heard, and drums beat.*
Ha! that shout
Halloos me on, and seems as if my fortune
Cried "Triumph" from afar. Come forth, my sword!
Be true as fate to me.—Again! [*Another shout.*
I come!
Rise, Spaniards, rise! like crouched tigers start;
Rush on the slaves, and revel in their blood!
[*Exit.*

SCENE III.

A Street.

Enter Hamet and Haly, supporting Malec, and other Moors.

MAL. Give me a scymitar!—let me go back,—
Let me behold my brave heroic Moor!

HAL. Soon as he pluck'd you from the raging flames
He gave us orders to conduct you here;—
This is the way to safety.

Mal. That to glory!
Let me go back, and fight till all my life
Flows from my swelling veins!—Shall I stand here,
While he confronts the fiery face of battle?—

Hal. Your safety is our nation's common weal—

Ham. Behold, he sinks
Beneath the pow'r of torture—It is well!
Or back he would have rush'd—To th' eastern gate
Bear him with swiftest speed, while we return,
And share our prince's perils.—Come, my friends,
And plunge amid the tumult—that afar
Rolls like the mutt'ring thunder.

Hal. Hold!—he comes—
And bears no happy presage.

Enter Hemeya.

Hem. All is lost!—
Fly—all is lost!—

Ham. What means my glorious prince?—

Hem. Pescara had foreseen our enterprise:
With all his veterans he falls upon us—
And piles up heaps of carnage—Fly! away!—
(*Drums.*)
Hark—there! again!—One moment, and my friend
Is drawn within my fate—Fly—follow him—
Preserve him, Hamet!—and I charge thee, Hamet,
Watch o'er Florinda's safety—even now
To yonder gate a faithful Moor conducts her—

I will endeavour to defend this pass.
And gain some precious instants.

HEM. Shall we leave you
To perish here alone?---

HEM. Aye, let me perish—
No matter what befalls me!—Here, alone,
I'll stem the tumbling torrent hence away.—
See where it falls upon us—Be it thy care,
Hamet, to save Florinda and my friend!

[*Exeunt Moors.*

Thou evil genius of my natal hour,
Thou dark presiding spirit of my fortunes,
Who mad'st me slave---then traitor---and at last
Hast made me wretch!---here, here I bare my bosom:
Try if in all thy quiver there be left
Another shaft to pierce it. Ha! he comes!---
Well, hast thou gorged thyself with blood enough?
Art satisfied with murder?

Enter Pescara.

PES. Yield thee, slave!
Yield, traitor and apostate! traitor Christian,
Apostate Moor!---Thy coward countrymen
Are scatter'd and dispers'd---and not a hope
Is left thee now.

HEM. Thou liest! there is hope
To shed thy heart's black venom ere I fall.

[*They fight.*

Enter Spanish Soldiers, who rush upon Hemeya.

Pes. Alive!---seize him alive!---
My foe! the man I hate! and in my grasp!---
I have thee!——

Hem. Aye! thou seest me here before thee,
Surrounded by thy blood-hounds. Yet, Pescara,
E'en here, encompass'd by thy pow'r, Pescara,
I can defy thee still.

Pes. Defy me! dost thou?

Enter Spaniard.

Span. My lord, the daughter of the Count Alvarez,
With Malec, borne on steeds of Arab race,
Fly thro' the eastern gate.

Pes. Perdition!

Hem. Destiny,
Art thou not powerless now? and thou, Pescara,
Speak! may I not defy thee? Well mayest thou stand
As if the light'ning rived thee. Now, Pescara,
I brave---I tread upon thee.

Pes. Fury! despair!
Love, rage, and madness, seize upon my heart!
Fight for your prey, and rend it.---Now revenge!
Revenge, where art thou? Hast thou held thy cup
High to my burning lip, to mock my thirst;
Then, as I clutched, to dash it from my grasp?—
Traitors and slaves! gone; fled are all my hopes!
Thus wither'd in an instant—tumbled down—
Hurl'd headlong from the height to which I toil'd!

Do you stand here to gape upon my tortures,
And blast me with his sight?---Away with him!
Hence!---let me not behold him!---to the rack!
That joy is left me still!

HEM. Bind me upon your beds of burning pain,
Here on my limbs waste all your arts of agony,
And try some new experiment in torture---
Yet, even then, the pangs that rend my body
Will be heav'n's bliss to torment such as thine—
Guilt's poison'd shaft shall quiver in thy heart!
And in Remorse's fires thy scorpion soul
Shall writhe and sting itself!

PES. Hence! from my sight!
This instant let him die!

HEM. And may'st thou live,
With thy eternal hell within thee live,
And, to be fully damned, be immortal!

[*Exit Hemeya, guarded.*

Enter Gomez.

GOM. My lord, I give you joy.

PES. No, give me all the torments
That teem within thy brain---Am I not foil'd—
Dash'd from my purpose—thrown upon the ground?
When I had hover'd long, and pounc'd upon her,
She 'scapes me—she is gone!

GOM. She is o'ertaken:
The Moor has 'scap'd—but she is your's again.

PES. Mine!—in my clutch!—within my hate again!

Mine! Vengeance! all thy joys have burst within me,
And detestation triumphs in my soul—
Mine!—Mine again! My friend, let me embrace thee.
What hoa! who waits there? Ha! methinks I have her
Clasp'd in my arms already!—on the wheel
Methinks I see him heave!—What hoa! who waits there?
My star shall never set—Mine! mine again!

Enter Spaniard.

To that fam'd chamber in the Alhambra palace,
Where Moorish kings were wont to be confin'd,
Conduct the traitor. Mine, indeed, again!
Gomez, she shall be mine!—
You shall behold
Pescara's master-piece.

Gom. You would not spare him?

Pes. Spare him!—But hold, she comes to meet my purpose—
Let us retire, and unobserved. I'll tell thee
The thought that labours here———

Enter Florinda.

Will none in pity teach me if he lives,
And pluck the frantic agonies of hope
From out my tortur'd heart?
Ha! here is one [*Gomez approaches her.*
That Death has sent to tell me---

GOMEZ. What wouldst thou learn?

FLOR. No! I would still hope on---
Don't tell me---Even now I would have given
The world to hear he liv'd---but do not speak,
Lest thou shouldst tell me that he breathes no more!
The sound would blast me!

GOM. He has pass'd the bounds
That limit earthly pardon---

FLOR. He is dead!

GOM. 'Twere too much mercy
That he had perish'd in his impious deed---
Do not deceive yourself---
With its short glimmer hope deludes the heart,
Plays for a moment on the clouds of fate,
And leaves behind a blacker desolation.---
No mortal arm can aid him!

FLOR. Then you kill'd him---
You kill'd him in your dungeons---
You plung'd your cruel hands within his breast.

GOM. Let not your fears thus hurry you away---
By Count Pescara's order he was led
To the Alhambra palace---but I deem
That in the Inquisition's deepest cells
Reserv'd for ev'ry torment---

FLOR. Does he live?---

PES. (*From a distant part of the Stage.*)
He lives, and shall not die!

FLOR. Thrice-blessed sound!

Hope, thou art here!—and never mother yet
Hugg'd her dear child with half the tenderness
I feel thee here, and clasp thee to my heart—
He shall not die!

Pes. (*Who gradually advances towards her, after dismissing Gomez.*)
He shall not!

Flor. Let me see thee—
Let me behold the man who bids me hope—
And, tho' thy words be false, still speak them o'er,
And say he shall not die! (*Suddenly recognises him.*)
Pescara!

Pes. Yes!
Don't gaze upon me with misdoubting fears—
I know you marvel that Pescara's breast
Should own a single touch of pity's weakness;—
But you mistake me—Nature did me wrong,
When on my face she laid her ruder hand,
And seem'd to make me pitiless—My heart
Is rich in tenderness—the Moor shall live—
I pardon him!

Flor. Heav'ns! is it possible?
Or has grief wrought upon my tortur'd brain
Until it grew to wild delirious joy,
And madness made me blest?—It is indeed!
It is Pescara! Oh, my lord! once more
Tell me that he shall live—

Pes. He shall!

Flor. Let me embrace your feet—here let me fall,
And drop in helpless clinging gratitude!

Oh! let me look upon you---Gracious heaven!
I now no longer see the man I fear'd---
No! Mercy sheds its light about thy head!
A glory beams around thee---Oh! Pescara—
Art thou so great, so god-like, to forgive?

PES. Hemeya shall be free! I spare my foe
To win Florinda's gratitude—to win
That look that melts me, and that smile that
—burns---

FLOR. Once---will you not forgive me when I
tell it?—
I shudder'd when I look'd upon your face,
And shrunk at your approach---I fear'd your eye---
But now you have compell'd me to esteem you,
And with the gentlest, dearest violence,
Have won my admiration!

PES. Once you hated me.

FLOR. I did not know your virtue.

PES. 'Tis in you---
'Tis in your heart I seek my recompense.

FLOR. Your own heart will reward you.---When
you see
The man you spar'd---when you behold his face,
And watch him as he heaves the air of heav'n,
And looks upon the sun, will you not feel
A transport in your bosom? When you wake
At midnight's hour, will you not be at peace,
And sleep again upon that blessed thought?
And, as you kneel to heaven, may you not ask
That mercy that you gave?—

PES. These are the gifts

Of self-rewarding virtue---but, Florinda,
A traitor's life deserves a larger price.
He shall be free,
But such condition as on life I set
Must be perform'd.---

Flor. Speak what I am to do:
Command me something dire; something impossible
To any heart but woman's when she loves;—
Barefoot o'er burning deserts bid me go
On some far pilgrimage; let ev'ry limb
Be wrapp'd within the sackcloth's galling fold---
I will endure it all---and bless misfortune!---
Nay, I will fall in love with wretchedness,
If 'tis for him I bear it.

Pes. Do not think
That on your tender nature I impose
Such rude conditions.
You shall be the harbinger
Of freedom and of life—Your steps shall seek
The dungeon where he lingers, and your hand
Unbar the pond'rous bolts.

Flor. Oh! let me fly.

Pes. But first the price of freedom must be paid.

Flor. My life, if you command it!—With my life
I'll buy his dearer safety.

Pes. With yourself!—
To-night you must be mine—my wife!

Flor. Your wife!

Pes. Aye, madam! Is there thunder in the sound?

Flor. You do not mean it—No! you do not ask it—

You cannot think it.

Pes. I am resolv'd upon it.—

What mean these shudd'ring looks, these trembling hands,

These heav'n-turn'd eyes, and these wild fits of horror?

Where is the desp'rate valor which o'erthrew

Nature herself, and mock'd impossibility?

You would have giv'n your life; I ask your love,

Flor. My life, but not my love! I cannot give

What I no longer have—My wretched heart

Lies in Hemeya's dungeon. Pardon me,

But, rather than resign to other arms

A cold, reluctant, unconsenting form,

I'd fold a basilisk within my heart,

Bid its cold coil entwine my shudd'ring limbs,

And warm its icy flesh!

Pes. If you detest me as the serpent's coil,

Fear—fear me as its sting!—My lifted hand

Holds death above his head.

Flor. Upon my knees,

I call'd on heav'n to witness---

Pes. Well?

Flor. I swore I never would be yours.

Pes. Rage, do not choak me!

Flor. I breath'd a deadly oath, that in my tomb

I would lie down for ever—

Pes. Do you dare---?

But hold! I must dissemble---Do not weep,
Or if you do, like dew on morning roses
Your tears must dry in the warm light of love.

(*Attempts to embrace her.*)

Flor. Forbear, my lord!---I am a wretch indeed;—
But, while my sorrows cast me at your feet—
Fall'n as I am to be your suppliant—
Learn that you have not yet the rights of insult.

Pes. Curse on her pride!—Forgive me, fair Florinda,
If, thro' the blushing fence of modesty,
With hasty hand I dar'd to pluck its flowers.
The husband—

Flor. Husband!

Pes. Speak! will you be mine?—

Flor. Never!

Pes. Damnation! when the bow is bent,
And to the head the winged arrow's drawn,
The string slips off---Florinda!

Flor. Well, my lord!

Pes. Will you be mine?

Flor. You fright me---you appal my ev'ry sense!

Pes. I have too long endur'd it. Gomez, hoa!

Enter Gomez.

Gom. My lord, I wait your pleasure.

Pes. You shall feel (*to Florinda*)
What 'tis to wake the furies in my heart---
Hoa! Gomez, art thou there?---Drag, drag him forth!

Begone, I'll follow thee!

Flor. Oh! monstrous! horrible!

Pes. I say, begone!

Flor. (*Rushing up to Gomez.*)

Stay! in the name of Heav'n, whose priest you are,
Do not profane your office—do not stain
Your sacred robe with blood. Stay, holy father!
Go not on hell's curs'd errand.

Pes. Thou shalt see him
In madd'ning agony—thou shalt behold him,
And vainly think thou couldst have sav'd him too—

Flor. How?—Save him!—Can I save him?
(*Wildly.*)

Pes. Be my wife.

Flor. Your wife! Oh! no! it is too horrible!

Pes. I'll hunt for life in ev'ry trembling limb,
And chase it down. The diving steel shall plunge—
Nay, do not stop your ears—for his shrill screams
Shall pierce the solid deafness of the tomb!

Flor. They're in my brain already!—Oh, Hemeya!
Let me not hear thy cries. Let, let me fly,
And 'scape from it.—Oh, for some depth of earth,
Where I may plunge to hear that scream no more!
(*Pescara seizes her as she attempts to fly.*)
Unhand me! let me fly!—'Tis in my heart,
My eyes, my brain—

Pes. Look there—look there!—He dies!—see where he dies!—
The wheel goes round—See, the red froth of blood!—

His hair stands up, and drips with agony!---
On thee---on thee he calls---and bids thee save
him!---
Look there!---

Flor. Spare, spare him! Villains! murderers!
Oh! spare him!---
Hemeya!---Lo, they wrench his heart away!
They drink his gushing blood!---Oh, God! Oh,
God!

(*She falls into Pescara's arms.*)

END OF ACT THE FOURTH.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Grenada stands in moon-light at some distance. Mosques and Palaces are seen in the perspective.

Enter Malec and Haly, at the head of the Moors. (The moon appears in a crescent.)

MAL. BEHOLD Grenada, Moors!

HAL. When the sun sunk
From yon high cliffs we scarce beheld its tow'rs
Set in the bright horizon's golden round.
Now, ere the auspicious night has pass'd its noon,
We stand before the city of our fathers.

MAL. Hemeya's life has wing'd your rapid march,
And, tho' the drops of labour dew'd your brows,
You triumph in the toil.—Behold Grenada!
There stand the tow'rs our fathers rais'd to heav'n,
To be the residence of Moorish kings.
Those silver spires, those magic palaces,—
The work of Arab art, the Alhambra's dome,
Are now the tenements of infidels;
And 'tis not fitting, Moors—

Enter Hamet.

Well, faithful Hamet,
Have you secur'd the sentinels?
Ham. In sleep
We found them sunk,—and from their lips have learnt
That in the Alhambra's prison lies our prince.
Mal. There then we speed, to burst its pond'rous gates,
And lead him forth to glory!—Not in vain
Pescara chose that dungeon, for its walls
Hold hidden murder in their hollow womb!
Ham. They tell, besides, that thro' Grenada's streets
There hath been joyaunce and wild revelry.
The garrison lie slumb'ring in debauch,
And will but wake to perish.
Mal. Let the scimitar
Be undefil'd by blood of innocence.
Come on!---'tis Heav'n conducts us---See, my friends,
In the pure azure, where the crescent shines,
And seems our glorious standard!---Let us on;
And, as we go, let ev'ry patriot breast
Be fill'd with trust, to see the diadem
Shine on your prince's brow!—I long to clasp him,
To rush into his prison, burst his chains,
And from a dungeon lead him to a throne!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Dungeon, of Saracenic architecture.

Hemeya discovered.

HEM. 'Tis hush'd!—a deep repose succeeds the murmur
Of their loud exultation, and my dungeon
Is still again:—it imitates the grave.
They triumph o'er my fate—and have, perchance,
Reserv'd me for to-morrow's spectacle.
It is for this I still am let to live!
Yet, they may be deceiv'd—for now, I deem,
The hour is almost come which Malec mark'd
To fall upon Grenada. Hope, thou flatterer,
I cannot trust the voice that whispers me
She still may be mine own! What sound was there?
Or death or safety comes!—What heav'nly form
Glides like a beauteous spirit on the night?
Still, still it comes upon me!

Enter Florinda, in bridal garments, and with a wreath of flowers on her head.

It is herself!
It is!—it is Florinda!

FLOR. Oh! Hemeya!

[*Falls fainting into his arms.*

HEM. My eyes behold thee, and my arms embrace thee!

I have thee here—here on this throbbing breast,
The resting-place of love! Droop not, sweet flow'r!—
Oh, smile upon me!—tell me—ev'ry sense
Be charm'd at once. Say, by what wond'rous ways
Thou'rt here before me—Yet, I know it all—
Malec victorious comes. The Moors arise—
They burst their bonds!—and thou art mine for ever!

Flor. I pr'ythee do not speak!—thy words disturb me.

Hem. Thy looks but ill befit an hour so blest.

Flor. Thou'rt sav'd! 'tis all that's left of happiness—
I am not quite accurs'd.

Hem. Accurs'd! Florinda?

Flor. One moment, as I gaz'd upon thy face,
I felt a throb of joy within my bosom,
Such as I us'd to feel when I beheld thee.
The slumb'ring serpent wakes, it winds around,
And here it stings!—Ah! how it stings me here!

Hem. Why, how is this? joy has no tears like these.

Flor. The gate stands stretch'd upon its hinge —I will—
Yes, I will look my last---(*after a long pause*) Now, go for ever!

Hem. Thy words are full of madness or despair.

Flor. Oh, question me no further, but begone!

Hem. By heav'n and earth, no pow'r shall tear me hence,
Till thou hast satisfied the fearful thought
That rushes on my soul! Thou'rt here alone—
Why art thou here alone?—Where, where is Malec?

Flor. (*Wildly*) Malec!

Hem. Distract me not—I saw thee turn away
Far from Grenada's gates. Shrink not, but hear me!
This night—this very hour, the Moors decreed
To seize Grenada!

Flor. Moors! Grenada!

Hem. Yes!—
This very night the Moors had form'd a project
To fall upon Grenada.

Flor. Gracious Heav'ns!
Oh God! what have I done? Was it this night?
This cursed night of death, despair, and horror!
Was there another way to save thee from him?—
O God! what have I done?

Hem. Ah! frantic thought!
It grapples at my heart!—thy sight doth blast me!
This bridal robe!—these flow'rs—they're full of adders!

Flor. And are they here—to mock my wretchedness?—
Off! Off, I say! you should not blow for me!
Did not a blight fall on you as you grew
Around this cursed front? Off! Off, I say!
And in your place let hemlock blacken here!

And from the yawning church-yard let them weave
A ranc'rous garland—Let the roots of death
Bloom on this blasted front!
Ah! ah! Hemeya!—
Had'st thou but told me, ere this wretched moment,
That Malec could have saved thee—thou wouldst ne'er
Behold a victim clad for sacrifice
Shudd'ring before thy sight, and thinking death
The only mercy left.---Then I had been—
I had been still thine own---But now, oh God!
I do not dare to tell thee what I am.

Hem. Let me embrace thee once ere thou hast said
What will call down my curse, and make me fling thee
Like a detested creature from my heart!

Flor. Hold! for thy touch is guilt---Unloose me!---spare me!—
I am---

Hem. What art thou?

Flor. I am Pescara's wife!

Hem. Thou art a woman!—that's another name
For falsehood, treason, perjury, and hell!

Flor. If I have wrongs to Heaven, I've none to thee.

Hem. Where is thy oath to die?—thine oath, Florinda!

Where is thy oath that an eternal grave
Should be thy bed?

FLOR. I have kept it—'twas thy life
That dragg'd me to the shrine—to save that life—
To pluck thee from the rack.

HEM. No—'twas to bind me
Down on a bed of fire!—Ten thousand deaths
Were better than to see thee what thou art!
E'en from Pescara's arms—

FLOR. No—at the shrine
I claim'd aloud his promise—I was desperate;
And tho' he stamp'd, and in his mouth a curse
Froth'd in its gnashing fury, from the altar
I rush'd into thy dungeon. Oh, Hemeya!
I came to give thee freedom.—Go, Hemeya,
And leave me here to die! Oh! prize that life,—
I charge thee, prize it well,—for which I paid
So large a price.—Keep! keep it as the pledge
Of broken-hearted love! and, ere thou goest,
Hear my last words—for, wedded as I am,
Death will excuse the passion of my soul.—
Since first I saw, I loved thee;—ev'ry day
But added to the fire thine eyes had kindled:—
And now, e'en now, thou art more dear than ever!
There may be those as wretched as myself,
But none e'er lov'd so tenderly—Pescara!

(*Pescara, who has gradually advanced during the last speech, rushes between them.*)

PES. Have I no other name?
It is your husband!

Hem. Villain!

Flor. Do not speak to him---
Thou art still within his power.

Pes. I sent thee here
To liberate a traitor---Opportunity
Should not have been abus'd.---Why is he here?

Flor. He shall depart---Oh, hold! (*To Hemeya.*)
He shall depart.

Pes. He shall---and never shall return.

Hem. Pescara,
This blackest plot of hell was worthy thee!
Worthy the Inquisition, where thy soul
Was early framed to guilt.

Pes. (*Stamping.*) Behold my answer!
A Cell opens in the wall, and executioners appear in it.
Now let me look upon you!---This is well---
Thou art the man I hate---I woo'd this woman,
And I was scorn'd for thee---If without love
I lov'd, I didn't hate without revenge!—
Thou'st told me I was tutored in the cells
Of the Inquisition---Thou'rt in the right,
And I will prove that I have studied well
The science of infliction!

Hem. Dost thou think
Thy tortures fright me, then?

Pes. I do not think it---
Here is my victim!

Flor. Do you hear this, ye heavens?

Pes. And do you hear me---
E'en now the priest scarce breath'd the marriage vow,

And passion fiercely burn'd---yet, even then,
You dar'd me with his name---You called aloud,
And bade me free him---Love then died at once,
And hate reign'd here alone!---I sent thee here---
I followed thee---I saw thee in his bosom---
Now hear---He dies!

FLOR. O Heav'n!

PES. He dies before thy face.

FLOR. No, 'tis impossible---
'Tis but to try, 'tis but to terrify me;
You do not mean the horrid deed you speak---
You are a man—you are a human creature---
O no! thou wilt not---Have I not perform'd
Each dread condition? Did I not appear
Shudd'ring before the altar?---dids't thou not promise,
Did'st thou not swear? Am---am I not your wife?

PES. You are, and love my foe—Come forth, and seize him!

(*The Executioners advance.*)

HEM. And send me quickly from this cursed world,
Where guilt, like his, can triumph.

FLOR. Mercy!

PES. Mercy!

FLOR. Then, Heav'n, where are thy lightnings?

PAS. In my grasp.
Drag, drag him to your tortures!

FLOR. Hold, tormentors!
And kill, oh, kill me first—here, in my heart,
Quench your fell thirst for blood.

(*Pescara drags her from them.*)

Flor. Oh! let me not behold it—Death, do thy work—
Thou art too slow within my raging breast!
Fall, mountains, down, and hide me from this horror!
Burst, earth, and swallow me! Almighty Heav'n,
Stretch forth thy arm, and save him!—Ha! they drag him,
They bear him to their torments!—Why, O Heav'n!
Why am I thus abandoned?

Voices. (*Without.*) "The Moors!"

[*Florinda listens for a moment, and a shout is heard. She shrieks, and rushes towards the front of the Stage, and falls on her knees — Pescara stands appalled — The Alarm-Bell rings.*

Hem. That sound has rais'd me to the sun; my soul
Mounts into triumph!—Well, infernal villain,
Well may'st thou stand amaz'd—thy hour is come!
Thou art enclos'd in thy own den of blood.

Pes. Traitors and slaves!—Ha! that thought.

[*He clenches his dagger.*

(*Hemeya struggles with the Executioners.*)

This,---this is left me still!---Within my grasp
I clutch it like a fierce and desp'rate joy,
Look here! look here, vile Moor!---Despite of fate
I still shall triumph o'er thee.

Pescara advances to stab Florinda. As he lifts the dagger, Hemeya, who has broken from his Executioners, rushes up, tears it from his hand, and stabs him.—The Moors rush in with Malec at their head, while Florinda sinks into the arms of Hemeya. Pescara, after a vain attempt to speak, falls dead.

MAL. Hail, glorious Moor!

HEM. My friend! my brave deliverer!

MAL. The Moors are up in arms---The Alpuxerras
Have pour'd their marshall'd thousands to the field:
The crescent floats upon Grenada's tower,
And morning shall behold thee on the throne.
Kneel, Moors! behold your king!

HEM. Arise, my friends! Florinda, fate has pour'd
A thousand blessings in one rapt'rous hour---
But, in the thick'ning splendours of my stars,
Thou art my loveliest light.

FLOR. If it be possible,
Thou, who dost weigh our mis'ries with our crimes,
Oh, take from death this agony! Hemeya,
While 'twas for thee I trembled, pain grew dull,
And lost its pow'r upon me---Now, 'tis here!

HEM. Florinda!

FLOR. Yes, I have kept my promise to thee:
This is its dread fulfilment!---You were wrong
To chide me for my falsehood---Ere my marriage,

I pour'd a deadly draught within my veins,
That first was ice; but now in streams of fire
Comes rushing thro' my bosom!

Hem. Give me a sword!
Give me some means of death!---Bring, bring me poison!
Or tear me to the rack from which I 'scaped!
Here, here, in mercy plunge your steels together!
Ha! what is't I see? I thank thee, Fortune!
Thou hast struck the wound, but thou canst heal it too.

He perceives Pescara's dagger on the ground, and stabs himself. Florinda shrieks, and falls on her knees beside him.

Mal. Thou shouldst have liv'd!---thy life was still thy country's!
And, but for that, I'd follow thee.

Hem. Florinda,
Fate cannot take the joy to look upon thee,
To die beholding thee!— (*Dies.*)

[*Florinda continues insensible.*

Mal. In the next battle
I'll find the way to join thee. Ha! Hemeya!
Is this the palace of thy monarchy?
Is this thy throne? And is this silent corse
All that remains of him that once I lov'd?

While Malec is speaking, Florinda appears to staunch the blood of Hemeya with her hair.

Flor. It still will flow—But I'll stay here for ever!

I'll look on these cold lips—My shiv'ring hand
Shall press this cold, cold, forehead!—and I'll staunch
This blood, that still flows on.

MAL. Remove the body—Poor distracted wretch,
I pity thee!—Uplift that bleeding corse,
And bear it from the dungeon.

FLOR. No, you shall not—
You shall not tear me hence—No!—never! never!
He is my lord!—my husband!—Death!—'twas death!—
Death married us together!—Here I will dig
A bridal bed, and we'll lie there for ever!
I will not go!—Ha! you may pluck my heart out,
But I will never go.—Help!—help!—Hemeya!
They drag me to Pescara's cursed bed,—
They rend the chains of fire that bind me to thee!
Help!—help!—(*She dies*).

THE END

EPILOGUE.

(WRITTEN BY E. S. BARRET, ESQ.)

SPOKEN BY MISS BOOTH.

A Player outside.

THE Prompter says you lost it—Find it you,
Or speak yourself——I can't without the cue.
[*Pushes on Miss Booth, and exit.*

Miss Booth searching round.

Bless me! did any see—have any found—
A scribbled sheet of paper on the ground?
Your pardon, pray *(To Audience)*; but that unlucky dog,
The Prompter, has mislaid our Epilogue.

Prompter outside, in a loud whisper.

I? 'twas yourself, Miss Booth!—What were you reading,
The time you ask'd me "Was the play succeeding?"

Miss Booth.

'Tis all a plot—and look! each great Grandee,
Who died just now, stands jesting there at me.
Yon Moor, *Hemeya*, who late rav'd about,
And stamp'd and storm'd most awfully, no doubt,
Is simp'ring slily there, to put me out!
Pescara, who could once *Florinda* scare,
Now chatters to her with the gayest air,
Forgetting she's a corpse; and, on my life,
By that gay air, forgetting she's his wife!
Fierce *Malec* scowls at me, as if, forsooth,
He thought me Miss *Florinda*, not Miss Booth;
And e'en *Florinda*—aye, Ma'am, you may frown—
Who late fell poison'd on the carpet down,
Looks not at her dead Moor, but dusty gown:

Nay, now while I expose her, turns round speedy,
And to *Pescara* cries—" Did you hear that, Macready?"
Say, damsels, who beheld her fate, have ye
Love warm enough to go so far as she?
She went into the other world, I ween,—
Ye would just go so far as—Gretna-Green!
Yet, love too fervent freezes in a trice,
As water boil'd will soonest turn to ice.
Not so with you—You first inquire, approve,
And, after, fall judiciously in love;
For, if an elder brother have th' estate,
The younger, faultless otherwise, you hate,
For that vile crime—of being born too late!
But when you wed, these transient follies flown,
Leave constancy, love, honour, all your own!
Home, stranger, friend, you solace, charm, endear;
And now 'tis yours our trembling hopes to cheer!
Support that sex, too, who to-night are scorn'd,
For mark—one only fair our stage adorn'd.
The world's a stage; and when one only fair,
Call'd Eve, was on it, sad things happen'd there:—
That stage a serpent ruin'd; he could hiss;
Then, ladies, let not serpents ruin this.
And, if to us you owe a single tear,
Now give your smiles to bless our efforts here.

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